

MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

1. DUNG WITH A DIFFERENCE

There is a resident population of hanuman langurs (*Presbytis entellus*) in and around the hills of Mahableshwar, Satara District, Maharashtra. Although langurs are said to be largely deciduous forest animals not entering dense evergreen forests (Roonwal and Mohnot 1977) one large and two small troops have been seen in the forests and on the periphery of human habitations at Mahableshwar all the year round.

Langurs are vegetarians, feeding on leaves, fruits berries, buds, flowers, bark, seeds and in rare cases insects. Unlike in the other areas of Urban India where langurs occur and are fed cooked food by humans, in Mahableshwar, the practice does not prevail and the langurs are usually seen raiding gardens, farms and domes-

tic garbage pits from where they are most often ousted by humans. This is probably why the langur community here is wary of humans and their presence. In March 1984, what we saw will perhaps prove that one langur at least, was feeding under extreme tension and in the absence of cheek pouches, had to swallow whatever it had found, fast.

Near the residence Madhukosh, which is on the periphery of the forest, we saw langur dung in one long piece except for a strange gap in the middle. On either side, was excreted matter and in between, a long pink plastic bag, shrivelled in shape to show that it had most certainly passed through the langur's intestine.

74 TURNER ROAD,
BANDRA, BOMBAY-400 050.

HETA PANDIT

13 NEEL TARANG,
210, VEER SAVARKAR MARG,
MAHIM, BOMBAY-400 016,
July 8, 1985.

DEBI GOENKA

REFERENCE

- ROONWAL, M. L. & MOHNOT, S. M. (1977): Primates of south Asia. Ecology, sociobiology and behaviour. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts & London. i-xviii, 1-421.

2. A POSSIBLE SIGHTING RECORD OF THE MALABAR CIVET (*VIVERRA MEGASPILA* BLYTH) FROM KARNATAKA

During the second week of April 1975, I visited Bhagavathy Valley, Koppa, Forest Division in Karnataka State (lat. 13° 12' N, long. 75° 12' E). Located at an approximate elevation of 100 m. in the western ghats, the dense wet evergreen forests of this valley are noted for the dominance of 'Balige' (*Poeciloneuron*

indicum) trees in the upper canopy. Though a major highway connecting Kudremukh mines to Mangalore disrupts it now, at the time of my visit the area was very isolated, being connected by a single fair weather logging road.

Travelling in the cabin of a logging truck at about 5.00 p.m., I saw a large civet walking

along the road. It seemed bigger than a stripe-necked mongoose (*Herpestes vitticollis*) and was considerably larger than both the small Indian Civet (*Viverricula indica*) and common Palm Civet (*Paradoxurus hermaphroditus*). Standing clear off the ground, it had a greyish indistinctly patterned coat and a black banded tail with a severe injury at mid-length, which I noticed from a distance of about 10 metres. It was not disturbed by the approaching truck, until a worker on the rear deck flung a piece of wood at it! It snarled before bolting into the bush. I was able to identify it with reasonable certainty as the elusive Malabar Civet (*Viverra megaspila*). Subsequently, I had an opportunity to examine a skin in the BNHS collection.

Malabar Civet, like many other western ghat rain-forest species, has a discontinuous distribution reappearing again only in South-east Asia. The Indian subspecies is *civettina* Blyth. (Prater 1971). Jerdon (1874) describ-

ed its range as the westcoast-Western Ghats complex extending from Cape Comorin northwards to 'Honore' (Honnavar, Uttara Kan-nada dist., Karnataka at about 15°N. lat.) and possibly beyond. He reported its occurrence in the vicinity of villages as well as in densely forested ghat regions. My sighting is within this range.

Due to paucity of recent information, this subspecies is listed as an endangered species by IUCN. A greeting card produced by World Wildlife Fund-India erroneously restricts its distribution to 'Coastal districts of Kerala' and fears that it may be extinct. In my opinion, civets like *V. megaspila* with large distributional range, adaptability to diverse habitat types possibly coupled to versatile foraging strategies, are unlikely candidates for extinction, in the absence of selective hunting pressure. The sighting reported above perhaps supports this view.

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REFERENCES

JERDON, T. C. (1874): A Handbook of the mammals of India — Reprint. Mittal Publications (1984), New Delhi.

PRATER, S. H. (1971): The book of Indian Animals. Bombay Natural History Society, Bombay.

3. NOTE ON THE BREEDING OF INDIAN WOLF *CANIS LUPUS PALLIPES* AT THE NATIONAL ZOOLOGICAL PARK, NEW DELHI

Little is known about the reproductive biology and postnatal care of the Indian wolf. This note is based on the data available in the National Zoological Park from November, 1981 to March, 1985 during which period the park could successfully breed the Indian wolf.

The Park obtained two male wolves from Jaipur Zoo on 25th November, 1981. They were released in an open enclosure of approximately 100 metres x 30 metres size with a common corridor interconnecting the cells at the back of the enclosure for locking the